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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5369
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1067
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0286
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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON MEXICO DRAWS ATTENTION,
CRITICISM

1. Summary. The Mexican press and political class focused on concerns expressed in the 2008 Human Right Report on Mexico regarding corruption and impunity as well as abuses committed in the course of the government's efforts to combat organized crime. Most commentators, including opposition politicians took little exception with the substance of report which touched on a range of human rights issues. Instead, several politicians called into question the right of the U.S. to stand in judgment of Mexico given its "failure" to address adequately the trafficking of arms and drug money into Mexico. Mexico's Foreign Ministry offered no immediate comment but informed us that it was reviewing the report and requested a meeting for the coming week to discuss it. End Summary.

2. Three of Mexico's leading dailies provided front-page coverage of the 2008 Human Rights Report on Mexico. Centrist dailies El Universal and El Economista assumed a generally objective stance in reporting that the report had focused on concerns relating to corruption and impunity and crimes committed by the security forces in the course of the government's efforts to combat organized crime. They drew attention to the report's positive assessment that the government "respects and promotes" human rights. El Universal, however, went on to note that the report speaks to many of the same abuses reported by the National Human Rights Commission including physical abuse, torture, and unlawful killings.

3. La Jornada, a left of center daily, offered more provocative reporting on the report focusing on criticism of the report lodged by opposition politicians from the Revolutionary Institution Party (PRI) and Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD). This criticism had more to do with the "right" of the U.S. to criticize Mexico's human rights record than with the substance of the report itself. PRD diputado Juan Guerra, for example lamented but did not necessarily reject the perception of Mexico as suffering from high levels of corruption. Instead, he objected to U.S. making this criticism in view of the fact that it is benefiting from this corruption, explicitly suggesting the U.S. is complicit in corrupt activities particularly as relate to the failure of U.S. customs official to address adequately arms trafficking, trafficking in persons, and narco-trafficking. PRI deputy Samuel Aguilar took a similar tack in criticizing U.S. customs officials for not doing anything to stop the flow of "dirty" money into Mexico.

4. Surprisingly, PRD leader Lopez Obrador offered one of the more balanced assessments remarking that while Mexicans don't appreciate the "foreign interference" the report represents, he found that the U.S. report "corresponds with what is happening in Mexico." Luciano Pascoe, Vice President of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) welcomed greater international focus on the problem of corruption and impunity but then couldn't pass up the opportunity to criticize the U.S. for not stopping the flow of weapons into Mexico. Interesting

enough, Raul Vera Lopez, the Catholic bishop of the state of Saltillo acknowledged that the U.S. has as much a right to criticize in Mexico about corruption and impunity as Mexico has to criticize the U.S. on immigration issues. He went on to describe the Mexican Government's strategy against the cartels as "inefficient" and maintain that as long as Mexico did not "take its gloves off" in going after corrupt politicians and senior government officials, violence and insecurity would increase.

¶5. Comment: Mexico's political elite strongly object to the U.S. assuming the role of judge in assessing the state of human rights in Mexico. Sensitivity over criticism rendered in this report is sharpened by a perception the U.S. is not meeting its responsibilities in particularly as relates to the trafficking of weapons into Mexico from the U.S. Notwithstanding angry complaints about the public nature of the report, no commentator quoted in the press took issue with substance of the report. In fact, almost all agreed corruption and impunity and abuses by the security forces were serious problems with some moving quickly to utilize the report as fodder to criticize the Calderon administration. Visit Mexico City's Classified Web Site at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/mexicocity> and the North American Partnership Blog at <http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/nap> / BASSETT